

BEING IN SHAPE TO RIDE

Whether it be in the form of beer, wine, or hard liquor, alcohol is a depressant that slows your reflexes, increases your reaction time, and distorts your vision and judgment. At the same time, alcohol often makes you feel more confident about your riding ability, causing you to take chances while riding that you normally would not take. This is a dangerous combination that often leads to serious motor vehicle accidents and tragic deaths.

Even one alcoholic drink can affect your ability to ride safely. The affects of alcohol can increase significantly if you are tired, emotionally upset, or have not eaten. No one is immune from the affects of alcohol consumption. Despite the rider's efforts to concentrate, one's ability to operate any vehicle safely is impaired after drinking. Alcohol is a drug that reduces the mental faculties and motor skills of all operators.

BLOOD ALCOHOL CONTENT (BAC)

When you drink an alcoholic beverage, your body works hard to eliminate the alcohol from your system. You do not digest alcohol as you do food. Alcohol is processed by your liver and kidneys, and this process takes time. There is no quick way to remove the alcohol from your system. Drinking black coffee, taking a cold shower, exercising or eating might make you feel more alert after drinking alcohol, but none of these actions has any effect on how quickly alcohol leaves the body.

Ideally, if you have had any alcoholic beverage, you should not ride or operate any motor vehicle. Determining exactly what is "too much" alcohol can be difficult. The amount of unprocessed alcohol in your body is measured as blood alcohol content (BAC), which can be determined by blood or breath test analysis. Your BAC depends on several factors:

- Your body weight.
- How much alcohol you have had to drink.
- The amount of food consumed prior to drinking alcohol.
- The length of time during which you have been drinking alcohol.

- The speed at which your body processes alcohol (every person processes alcohol differently).

Regardless of the type of alcoholic beverage consumed, the critical factor is the amount of alcohol consumed in a certain time period. Each of the following drinks contain about the same amount of alcohol (about $\frac{1}{2}$ oz.):

- 12 ounce Beer
- 4 ounce Glass of Wine
- 1 ounce Serving of 80-Proof Liquor



Any one of these drinks can increase the average person's BAC by 0.02%. If you consume more than one drink per hour, your BAC starts to rise, and only the passage of time will rid you of the effects of alcohol.

ALCOHOL TESTS

According to the Massachusetts Implied Consent Law, every licensed operator in the state agrees to consent to a breathalyzer or blood test under certain circumstances. If you are stopped by a police officer who believes you are operating a motor vehicle or motorcycle under the influence of alcohol or drugs, the officer has the right to ask you to:

- Perform a field sobriety test; and
- Submit to a breathalyzer or blood test to calculate your BAC (If Placed Under Arrest).

If you take a breathalyzer test and register a 0.08% BAC or higher, you are operating above the legal limit in Massachusetts. For operators under 21 years of age, Massachusetts has a "zero tolerance" law. This means a BAC of 0.02% is above the legal limit if you are under 21 years of age. Police officers are required to immediately seize your operator's license if you register an illegal BAC or you refuse a breathalyzer or blood test. The officer will issue to the operator a notice of suspension and temporary driving permit which will become effective twelve (12) hours after arrest. This temporary driving permit is valid for fifteen (15) days. The operator may use this opportunity to exercise their right to a license suspension hearing.

ILLEGAL DRUGS, MEDICINE AND OTHER CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES

Massachusetts laws that define violations and penalties for operating under the influence of alcohol also apply to drugs. Almost any drug can affect your ability to safely operate a motor vehicle. Illegal drugs, prescription medications and over-the-counter (OTC) remedies all decrease the operator's reaction time, vision and motor skills. If you are convicted of any drug offense, whether in Massachusetts or in another state, your operator's license will be suspended. Even if no motor vehicle was involved in the offense, Massachusetts law requires operators to lose operating privileges for a period of one (1) to five (5) years depending on the conviction.

PENALTIES

Conviction	Fine	Prison Term	License Suspension
First Offense	\$500–\$5,000	Maximum 2 1/2 years	1 year
For your first offense, the court may allow you to complete an alcohol or drug education course to reduce your license suspension period. (M.G.L. c. 90 § 24D)			Over Age 21, 45–90 days Under Age 21, 210 days
Second Offense	\$600–\$10,000	Minimum 30 days Maximum 2 1/2 years	2 years
Third Offense (Felony)	\$1,000–\$15,000	Minimum 150 days Maximum 5 years	8 years
Fourth Offense (Felony)	\$1,500–\$25,000	Minimum 1 year Maximum 5 years	10 years
Fifth Offense (Felony)	\$2,000–\$50,000	Minimum 2 years Maximum 5 years	Lifetime

MANDATORY LICENSE SUSPENSIONS (18 YEARS OF AGE AND OLDER)

Situation	Explanation	Suspension Period	Fee to Reinstate
Three Speeding Violations	Three speeding violations/responsible findings within any 1-year period.	30 days	\$100
Five Surchargeable Events	Any combination of moving violations and surchargeable accidents that total five surchargeable events within a 3-year period.	Must complete driver retraining program within 90 days or license will be suspended indefinitely until course is completed	\$100
Seven Surchargeable Events	Any combination of moving violations and surchargeable accidents that total seven surchargeable events within a 3-year period.	60 days	\$100
Habitual Traffic Offender	A total of three major moving violations or any combination of twelve major or minor moving violations within a 5-year period.	4 years	\$500
Out-of-State Suspension	License has been suspended or revoked in another state.	Until the out-of-state suspension is resolved	\$100

**MANDATORY LICENSE SUSPENSIONS
JUNIOR OPERATORS ONLY (16½ TO 18 YEARS OF AGE)**

Situation	Explanation	Suspension Period	Fee to Reinstate
Conviction for Violating Passenger Restriction	Three speeding violations/ responsible findings within any 1-year period.	30 days	\$100
Note: The suspensions below do not require violations to be the same type. A speeding violation following a drag racing violation will count as a second offense.			
Conviction for Speeding (c. 90, §17)	Any combination of moving violations and surchargeable accidents that total five surchargeable events within a 3-year period.	Must complete driver retraining program within 90 days or license will be suspended indefinitely until course is completed	\$100
Conviction for Speeding on Certain Highways (c. 90, §17A)	Any combination of moving violations and surchargeable accidents that total seven surchargeable events within a 3-year period.	60 days	\$100
Conviction for Drag Racing (c. 90, §17B)	A total of three major moving violations or any combination of twelve major or minor moving violations within a 5-year period.	4 years	\$500
Conviction for Violating Special Speed Regs. (c. 90, §18)	License has been suspended or revoked in another state.	Until the out-of-state suspension is resolved	\$100